

## **NORFOLK WELLNESS AND FITNESS CENTER**

### **Summary of the October 30<sup>th</sup> Community Forum**

The City Council held a public forum on October 30<sup>th</sup> at the Center for the purpose of receiving input from the community on the future programming of the Center.

The following are highlights of the responses received from that effort. We wish to thank all the citizens who participated (over 170) in the forum. Your input is greatly valued and will guide the City staff in this planning process.

#### **Key Areas of Interest for the New Center:**

- Quality programming
- Multi-generational programming
- Sufficient hours of operation for all to be able to have access
- Programming in the following types of activities:
  - Aquatics
  - Fitness
  - Arts – performing, arts & crafts, dance, music
  - Athletics
  - Senior
- Life enhancing programs that are unique and not typical to a normal recreation center
- Safety of the neighborhood and general “good neighbor” in terms of conduct of Center attendees, traffic, parking etc.
- Emphasis on service delivery/programming versus general office space
- Special interest groups – dance, skateboard park, dog park

#### **Next Steps:**

1. City staff is discussing the scope of services requested by the citizens with various service providers who have expressed interest in the Center.
2. Building repairs are underway. The City is completing \$10,000 in repairs to the large indoor pool. We have also been painting interior spaces, as well as making ceiling, flooring, wall and roof repairs.
3. City staff will be providing the City Council in December a proposal on scope of services and providers for the Center.
4. Our goal is to begin offering limited services in the Center after the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. This will be dependant on the City’s ability to hire staff, such as lifeguards, and on the timeline of the service providers to move into the Center.

## **Summary of Forum Feedback**

Participants broke into 8 groups to provide feedback in a number of areas. A summary of each work groups input follows.

### **Question 1: As a citywide resource, what should be the mission of the Norfolk Wellness and Fitness Center?**

#### **Group 1:**

- Serve Community with minimum of negative impact on neighborhood
- Community impact
- Traffic/sanitation
- Recreation
- All citizens, all ages
- Consolidation of Parks & Recreation
- Norfolk Service Center
- Adult day care
- Seniors

#### **Group 2:**

- Community outreach for all ages (not social services)
- Affordable
- Fitness-based
- Performing arts

#### **Group 3:**

- All age groups/ outside groups
- Aquatics
- Athletics open space

#### **Group 4:**

- Titled well, but excluded “community socializing”. Should be more than just wellness and fitness
- Meeting space
- Provide recreation, educational & social opportunities for the entire community
- Family destination – all ages should be welcome
- Performing arts
- Lunch for seniors
- Serve all the citizens in the community
- “Norfolk Community Center – Everything you ever wanted but were afraid to ask for!!!”
- Keep green space, pool
- No commercial use
- Keep security so all feel welcome
- Provide facilities for a wide variety of activities for all residents

#### **Group 5:**

- A multi-purpose broad mission because it is such a large facility
- Don't use for office space; keep to mission of recreation/cultural/social
- Enhance life; therapeutic services; long hours to accommodate firefighters, etc.
- Close by neighbors concerned about traffic issues
- Tiered memberships fees; membership card to track people
- State-of-the-art, multipurpose wellness center
- Fee for use

**Group 6:**

- Multipurpose, intergenerational, all ages & interests represented
- State of the Art multi-purpose Wellness & Fitness Center with a tiered membership fee
- Not a social service facility
- Affordable membership fee

**Group 7:**

- Activities for all ages
- Early morning
- Provide for cohesive community
- Strive for health & wellness center
- Needs to be a community in itself
- Attractive and safe for people to visit
- Seniors
- Day care
- Dance programs
- Arts & crafts
- Literacy
- Responsible use/community Use
- Dog park
- Swimming pool & swimming lessons
- Picnic tables and barbeques for families

**Group 8:**

- All age groups including outside groups
- Aquatics major service
- Available and open to use

**Question 2: What are the things that will make the center successful? What suggestions do you have for ensuring these things happen?**

**Group 1:**

- Dancing
- Parking
- Social center
- Youth league
- Norfolk Senior Olympian
- City maintenance of property
- Rent for use
- Fund raising from citizens
- Membership – lifetime
- Salvation Army/Crock Foundation

**Group 2:**

- Financial commitment by City
- Community involvement in types of services and in actual services
- Community building in programs
- Staff (friendly, trained)
- Security
- Parking

**Group 3:**

- Skate park
- Field
- Dance; performing arts

**Group 4:**

- Security & supervision
- Balance between youth and older groups
- Easy scheduling method
- Adequate maintenance budget
- Comprehensive operating hours from early to late
- Adequate staffing
- Possible fee for usage/membership. Reasonable fee to keep adequate staffing (trained to maintain mission). Not prohibitive but “controlling” sliding fee schedule
- Board composed of members
- Provide transportation from various areas of city
- Membership card to be on premises for security
- Establish programs that appeal to all ages
- Provide shuttle transportation from various areas of city
- Good cleanliness & maintenance

**Group 5:**

- Extended hours
- Safety and security – keep crime prevention in mind in planning stages; better lighting.
- Assign police officer or security officers full-time
- Partnership with Norfolk Senior Center? Partnership with YMCA? Partnership with Sentara? Ex: Riverside & Newport News Fitness Center
- 3 to 5 year plan
- Not an office space for city services
- Do a demographic survey for feedback
- Look at what programs the JCC did that were successful
- Charitable sponsorships
- Citizen’s/booster groups for facility

**Group 6:**

- No drugs tolerated
- Specific times for children and children & parents
- Not a drop off center
- Strong administration, independent
- Safety and security
- Political and community support
- Establish partnerships with existing programs (i.e. YMCA)
- Very professional, well-trained, & well-prepared staff
- Comprehensive hours: early and late
- Free & flex hours
- Supervised teen
- Skate park
- Developmental gymnastics, not competitive

**Group 7:**

- Membership: fee based or residential based
- There should be a sense of ownership
- Scale of fee base on income

- Compare fees with other area recreation centers
- Success: have offices of groups such as Senior Center, Police Precinct
- Building sense of stability
- Keeping it clean
- Operating hours accommodating different needs but not all night
- Mini Police Precinct
- Parking
- Activities for all ages: 6 months to 102
- Activities for age groups: mornings for seniors; others rest of time
- Provide cohesive activities for physical and mental well-being of all ages
- Space for 21<sup>st</sup> Street Seniors
- Partner for other organizations to use facilities
- Community within itself – community of people
- Maintain green space
- Security of facility – inside and out

**Group 8:**

- Safety, maintenance, security
- Financially viable for all. Affordable yet sustaining
- Wellness Center
- Performance Arts Center

**Question 3: List any specific programs, activities or services you would like to see provided at the Center that have not been covered or incorporated in the first two questions.**

**Group 1:**

- Dancing
- Pool
- Child care
- Senior services
- Civic leagues
- Ceramics
- Consolidation of Park & Recreation
- Trees
- Review former programs offered on the site; Maintain programs already established by JCC
- Green spaces.
- Some live oaks
- Waterfront
- Don't make us the large assembly spaces
- Independent Board of Directors
- Norfolk Community Center
- Good center/good neighbor
- All ages
- Resources
- Maintenance
- Community Impact
- City funded/Pay by fees
- Center location
- We want updates on programs: compass city league
- Little leagues
- Outside spaces
- Review former Community Plan

**Group 2:**

- Fitness (aerobic, cardio, youth, swimming, machines, etc.)
- Cultural (performing arts, ballet, drama, etc.) Not to compete with other facilities
- Senior programs (hours: i.e. don't drive at night)
- Educational (language, lectures)

**Group 3:**

- Reading room – quiet, daily papers, paperback exchange
- Pool – well maintained, programs
- Meal for seniors
- Dancing – good floor, good acoustics, more space than current dance studios. Ballroom, square dance, Contra dance, swing, international. **NOTE:** Dance groups will be willing to help pay for a sprung wooden floor being installed in one of the larger rooms.
- Indoor soccer on basketball court
- Boys & girls soccer, girls field hockey
- Computer center – courses
- Study room
- Meeting rooms w/ adequate chairs, tables
- Doesn't need to replicate programs that are already available nearby
- Classes
- Satellite library
- Volleyball (indoor)
- Space for performing arts (rehearsal & performance space)
- Yoga

**Group 4:**

- Reading room – quiet space
- Pool with programs
- Meals for seniors
- Good floor and space for dancing and gymnastics
- Good use of green space – soccer, field hockey
- Indoor volleyball
- Space for performing arts
- Discussion about duplication of other programs within the City of Norfolk
- Conflicting point of view on importance of location
- Climbing wall
- Indoor soccer

**Group 5:**

- Very large suspended wood floor. Dance space for square dance, contra dance
- Music room: fine arts, performing arts, tai chi, etc
- Exercise room
- Studio space for musicians and artists
- Tennis courts; soccer fields
- State of the art outdoor play area for children
- Large gym with free-weight, cardio, weight machines
- Keep green space – link by bike trails; exterior space must be well designed
- Dog park in corner if there is space
- Parking issues?
- Senior program for JCC needs to be resurrected
- Pools
- Meeting rooms for special interest groups

**Group 7:**

- Swimming, fields
- Dance programs
- Open early morning = 6:30 AM – 9:30 PM
- Dog park. Accommodate pet owners, neighborhood
- Fee-based afterschool programs
- Swimming programs, soccer, sports lessons
- Afterschool activities regulated through Center and fee-based to be used for recreation and study purposes
- Skate park
- Responsible use of facility
- Senior activities
- Senior center
- Literacy

**Group 8:**

- Skate park: Safe neighborhood; require helmets; lock up at sunset; Now have to driving to Virginia Beach, Hampton, etc.; there is not a skate park in Norfolk.
- Group use of fields